

## Vietnam | A Conversation with an ASEAN Insider: Jamie Loo

### Share with us a bit about yourself.

My name is Jamie Loo, and I started working with ZICO KL in year 2013. I joined the Real Estate Department under Karin Lim as an associate.

### Share with us where were you seconded to and for how long?

I am seconded to the Ho Chi Minh City office in Vietnam for a year, from May 2016 until May 2017.

### Share with us how you adjusted to the culture in your seconded country.

The Vietnamese culture is a conservative one. There are western influences on the younger generation, but on a scale, the Vietnamese culture is still predominantly strong. There are notable differences in the Vietnamese culture compared to Malaysia – the cuisine, mannerisms of the people, and the structure of the language, among others. The key to adjusting quickly is to fully embrace the changes and be open to anything new.

### Describe the most memorable/significant events you have experienced during your secondment?

In my first 5 months here, I have assisted on over 7 presentations for businesses in Vietnam. Every week there would be client meetings, or people dropping by the office for our legal services. These are things I have never been exposed to, or have the chance to participate in whilst working in KL.

### What have you learnt and gained during your secondment and how has that helped you?

I have learnt that it is not merely enough to give legal advice on a technical level, but also help our clients view things from a commercial point based on our transactional experiences. My work here is varied and diverse, and I am involved in the office's daily activities, with significant interaction on particular projects. This gives me valuable insight into the operations and objectives of each client. I also learn this from seeing the way David deals with the requests of clients and how he manages their expectations.

### How do you see the opportunities posted by the various lines of businesses in ZICO and its ASEAN network?

During my time here I worked on a presentation which relates to the real estate/land laws of each ASEAN country. ZICO's integrated ASEAN network impressed the audience and caught the attention of investors who later indicated interest to work with us. These investors often have plans to expand to the other ASEAN countries, and we could direct them to our other ZICO Law offices. There is also another Malaysian lawyer here with me, Joann Lee from the KL Intellectual Property department, who has proven to be invaluable for IP queries from clients. This is made possible because of the opportunities created by ZICO and its ASEAN network for its employees.

### Would you go for another secondment or recommend your colleagues for secondment?

I have benefitted from this secondment programme in terms of professional experience and would encourage other lawyers to take on the same opportunity and push themselves out of their comfort zone.

### In few words, how would you describe the secondment experience?

I believe each secondment experience may be different. It depends on how you approach it. For me so far it has been motivating, challenging, and enjoyable. It could be frustrating and testing at times, but it is ultimately rewarding.

### How is it like to work in ZICO/ZICO Law so far?

Having been in ZICO for 3 years now, I have had the privilege of meeting and working with amazing people. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with my colleagues where the professional relationships have also developed to become close friendships. When it comes to the working culture of any organisation I believe that enthusiasm and drive can be created by the surrounding culture of an organization, and is reflected in the standard of conduct and core values demonstrated by its leaders. Learning opportunities are also vital to stimulate and retain talent, and should be readily available. Thirdly, instituting a reward system that not only focuses and targets positive acknowledgement and recognizes both job performance and intangible contributions will drive employees to go the extra mile as they feel valued. I believe ZICO has achieved this to a certain extent as there is a sense of community and camaraderie among the workforce.

